

JAN. 27,
1940

Liberty 5¢



HITLER and STALIN

What is really going on in Russia

BY LEON TROTSKY

CLARK GABLE'S SECRET WISH

BY JOHN ERSKINE

BY LEON TROTSKY

READING TIME • 21 MINUTES 20 SECONDS

WHEN Hitler invaded Poland with lightning speed from the west, Stalin cautiously crept into Poland from the east. When Hitler, having subjected 23,000,000 Poles, proposed to end the "useless" war, Stalin through his diplomatic channels and his Comintern praised the advantages of peace. When Stalin occupied strategic positions in the Baltic, Hitler readily transferred his Germans elsewhere. When Stalin attacked Finland, Hitler's press, alone in the world, proclaimed its own complete solidarity with the Kremlin. The orbits of Stalin and Hitler are bound together by some internal attraction. What kind of attraction? How long will it last?

Twin stars are "optical"—that is, apparent; or "physical"—that is, true twins, forming a pair in which one star revolves about the other. Do Hitler and Stalin represent true or apparent twin stars in the present bloody sky of world politics? And if they are true twins, who revolves about whom?

Hitler himself speaks reservedly about the durable, "realistic" pact. Stalin prefers to smoke his pipe in silence. The politicians and journalists of the hostile camp represent Stalin as the main star and Hitler as the satellite in order to foment a quarrel between them. Let us attempt to analyze this by no means simple question, not forgetting that the orbits of world politics cannot be determined with such precision as the orbits of celestial bodies.

Having arisen much later than the western Powers, capitalist Germany constructed the most advanced and dynamic industry on the European continent; but it had been passed by in the previous division of the world. "We will divide it again," proclaimed the German imperialists in 1914. They were mistaken. The aristocracy of the world united against them and triumphed. Now Hitler hungers to repeat the experiment of 1914 on a more grandiose scale. He cannot help hungering for this. German capitalism is suffocating within the confines of her boundaries. Nevertheless Hitler's problem is insoluble. Even if he wins the war, the redivision of the world in favor of Germany cannot take place. Germany came too late. Capitalism is stifling everywhere. The colonies don't want to be colonies. The new World War will give a tremendous invigorated impulse to the movement for independence among the oppressed nations.

Hitler switches "friendships," evaluations of nations and governments, breaks agreements and alliances, dupes enemies and friends; but all this is dictated by one sole objective: redivision of the world. "Germany is not a world power at the present time," Hitler wrote in his



Whose headache is this game of power politics between these two? All the world has assumed, since their pact, that it is Hitler's—but NOW read what Leon Trotsky has to say of it!

HITLER and STALIN-

book. But "Germany will become a world power or cease to exist." To convert united Germany into a base for European domination; to convert united Europe into a base for the struggle for world domination, consequently for confining, weakening, and reducing America—this task remains unchanged for Hitler. This end is for him the justification for the totalitarian regime which suppressed the class contradictions inside the German nation with an iron hoop.

Completely contradictory features characterize the U. S. S. R. Czarist Russia left a heritage of misery and backwardness. The mission of the Soviet regime is not that of securing new areas for the productive forces but that of erecting productive forces for the old areas. The economic tasks of the U. S. S. R. do not necessitate the extension of her borders. The level of her productive forces forbids a major war. The offensive power of the U. S. S. R. is not considerable. Her defensive power consists, above all, in her vast spaces.

Last March, after many years of extravagant official boasting, Stalin for the first time spoke at the conven-

tion of the Russian Communist Party on the comparative productivity of labor in the U. S. S. R. and the West. This excursion into the sphere of world statistics was made in order to explain away the poverty in which the peoples of the U. S. S. R. still live. In order to catch up with Germany in the production of pig iron, the U. S. S. R. in relation to its population would have to produce 45,000,000 tons a year instead of the 15,000,000 of today; in order to catch up with the United States, it would be necessary to raise the yearly production of pig iron to 60,000,000 tons—that is, to quadruple it. The same is true, and even more unfavorably, of all the other industries. Stalin, in conclusion, expressed the hope that the Soviet Union would catch up with the advanced capitalist countries during the next ten to fifteen years. Naturally, this time limit is questionable. But the involvement of the U. S. S. R. in a major war before the end of this period would signify in any case a struggle with unequal weapons.

The subjective factor, not less important than the material, has changed in the last years sharply for



A sensational revelation! A famous exile unveils the mystery of what is really going on in Russia today

eral staff of Moscow became convinced, evidently, that the Allies were ill prepared for a major war. The thoroughly militarized Germany is a formidable enemy; it is possible to buy her benevolences only by co-operating in her plans.

Stalin's decision was determined by this conclusion. The alliance with Hitler not only eliminated for the time being the danger of involving the U. S. S. R. in a major war but also opened up the possibility of gaining immediate strategic advantages. In the Far East, Stalin retreated again and again for a number of years in order to escape war; on the western border the circumstances were such that he was able to escape war by fleeing—forward; not through giving up old positions but through taking new ones.

The press of the Allies pictures the situation as if Hitler were Stalin's prisoner, and exaggerates the gains that Moscow made at the expense of Germany—half of Poland (according to population about one third), plus domination of the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea, plus an open door to the Balkans, etc. The advantages won by Moscow are undoubtedly considerable. But the final score has not yet been settled. Hitler started war on a worldwide scale. From this struggle Germany will either emerge master of Europe and all the European colonies, or will founder. To safeguard his eastern flank in such a war is a question of life or death for Hitler. He paid the Kremlin with provinces of the former Czarist empire. Is this payment too high?

The argument that Stalin duped Hitler with his invasion of Poland and his pressure on the Baltic countries is completely absurd. It is much more probable that Hitler himself inspired Stalin to occupy eastern Poland and to lay hands on the Baltic States. Inasmuch as National Socialism grew out of a crusade against the Soviet Union, Stalin naturally could not depend upon Hitler's word of honor. The negotiations were carried out in a "realistic" tone. "You are afraid of me?" Hitler asked Stalin. "Do you want guarantees? Take them yourself." And Stalin took them. To picture it as if the new western boundary of the U. S. S. R. were a permanent barrier to Hitler's road eastward violates all proportion. Hitler solves his tasks by stages. On the order of the day now is the crushing of Great Britain. For the sake of this objective it is possible to sacrifice something. The march eastward presupposes a major war between Germany and the U. S. S. R. When the

How long will it last?

the worse. The tendency toward Socialist equality proclaimed by the revolution has been stamped out and defamed. In the U. S. S. R. there are twelve to fifteen million privileged individuals who concentrate in their hands about one half of the national income, and who call this regime "Socialism." On the other hand there are approximately 160,000,000 people oppressed by the bureaucracy and caught in the grip of dire poverty.

THE relations of Hitler and Stalin to the war are completely contradictory. The totalitarian regime of Hitler arose out of the fear of the possessing classes of Germany before a Socialist revolution. Hitler was mandated by the owners to save their property from the menace of Bolshevism at any cost, and to open up a pasageway to the world arena. Stalin's totalitarian regime arose out of the fear of the new caste of revolutionary parvenus before the strangled revolutionary people.

War is dangerous for both of them. But Hitler is unable to carry out his historical mission by any different means. A victorious offensive war

would secure the economic future of German capitalism and, along with this, the National Socialist regime.

It is different with Stalin. He cannot wage an offensive war with any hope of victory. In case the U. S. S. R. enters the war, with its innumerable victims and privations, the whole fraud of the official regime, its outrages and violence, will inevitably provoke a profound reaction on the part of the people, who have already carried out three revolutions in this century. No one knows this better than Stalin. The fundamental thought of his foreign policy is to escape a major war.

Stalin engineered an alliance with Hitler, to the surprise of all the diplomatic routinists and pacifist simpletons, because the danger of a major war could come only from Hitler, and because, according to the Kremlin's evaluation, Germany is mightier than her possible enemies. The protracted conferences in Moscow with the military delegations of France and England last summer served not only as a camouflage for the negotiations with Hitler but also as direct spying for military information. The gen-

time comes for this war, the question as to what meridian the struggle will begin upon will have only secondary significance.

The attack upon Finland seems at first glance contrary to Stalin's dread of war. But the matter in reality is different. Beside the blueprints there is an objective logic in the situation. In order to escape the war, Stalin made an alliance with Hitler. In order to safeguard himself against Hitler, he occupied a series of bases on the Baltic coast. However, Finland's resistance threatened to reduce all these strategic advantages to zero and even to convert them into their opposite. Who will settle accounts with Moscow if Helsinki refuses? Stalin, having read off "A," is compelled to read "B." Then follow the other letters in the alphabet. Stalin seeking to escape a war does not mean that war will permit Stalin to escape.

Germany obviously pushed Moscow against Finland. Each step Moscow takes westward brings closer the involvement of the Soviet Union in the war. If this objective were gained, the world situation would change considerably. The Near and Middle East would become the arena of the war. The question of India would arise at once. Hitler would breathe with relief and, in case of an unfavorable turn of events, gain the possibility of concluding peace at the expense of the Soviet Union. Moscow undoubtedly gnashed its teeth upon reading the friendly articles in the German press. But gnashing one's teeth is not a political factor. The pact remains in force. And Stalin remains Hitler's satellite.

The immediate advantages to Moscow in the pact are indisputable. So long as Germany is occupied on the western front, the Soviet Union feels much more free in the Far East. This doesn't mean that offensive operations will be launched there. It is true that the Japanese oligarchy is even less capable of waging a war than the one in Moscow. However, compelled to face the west, Moscow cannot have the slightest motive for expanding in Asia. Japan, for her part, must consider that she could expect a serious and even annihilating resistance from the U. S. S. R. Under these conditions Tokyo must prefer the program of her navy—an offensive not to the west but to the south, toward the Philippines, Dutch East Indies, Borneo, French Indo-China, British Burma.

An agreement between Moscow and Tokyo on this basis would constitute a symmetric supplement to the pact between Moscow and Berlin. The question as to how this would influence the situation of the United States does not enter into the scope of this article.

REFERRING to the lack of raw materials in Russia itself, the world press insists upon the insignificance of the economic help which Stalin can render Hitler. The question, however, is not so simple. The

lack of raw materials in the U. S. S. R. has a relative, not an absolute character; the bureaucracy in its drive for a high tempo of industrial development cannot maintain a proper balance between different sections of the economy. If the tempo of growth in various sections of industry is lowered for a year or two from 15 per cent to 10 or 5 per cent, still more if industrial production is maintained at the level of the preceding year, a significant surplus of raw materials immediately appears. The absolute blockade of German foreign trade will, on the other hand, inevitably divert a considerable amount of German exports to Russia in exchange for Soviet raw materials.

Moreover, it must not be forgotten that the U. S. S. R. has stocked and is still stocking immense reserves of raw materials and foodstuffs for defensive military purposes. A significant part of these reserves represents a potential source of supplies for Germany. In addition to this, Moscow can turn over to Hitler gold, which in spite of all the efforts to establish a closed economy remains one of the important sinews of war. Finally, the friendly neutrality of Moscow extraordinarily facilitates Germany in exploiting the resources of the Baltic countries, Scandinavia, and the Balkans. "Together with Soviet Russia," not without foundation wrote the *Völkischer Beobachter*, Hitler's organ, on November 2, "we dominate the sources of raw materials and foodstuffs of the whole East."

SEVERAL months before the conclusion of the pact between Moscow and Berlin, London evaluated more soberly than now the importance of the economic assistance which the U. S. S. R. could give Hitler. A semi-official investigation conducted by the Royal Institute of International Affairs on the "political and strategic interests of the United Kingdom" (the introduction is dated March, 1939) declares in relation to the possibility of a Soviet-German rapprochement: "The danger to Great Britain of such a combination might be very great. It is questionable," continues the collective author, "how far Great Britain could hope to reach a decisive victory in any struggle with Germany unless the German eastern frontier could be blockaded by land." This evaluation deserves the most careful attention. It would not be an exaggeration to state that the alliance with the U. S. S. R. diminishes the effectiveness of the blockade against Germany by at least 25 per cent and perhaps considerably more.

To the material support it is necessary to add—if this word is in place—the moral support. Up to the end of August the Comintern demanded the liberation of Austria, Czechoslovakia, Albania, Abyssinia, and was silent about the British colonies. Now the Comintern is silent about Czechoslovakia, supports the division of Poland, but demands the liberation of India. The Moscow *Pravda* attacks

the suppression of liberties in Canada but is silent about the bloody executions of Czechs by Hitler and the tortures of Polish Jews. All this means that the Kremlin still has a high appraisal of Germany's strength.

And the Kremlin is right. Germany happened to be, it is true, incapable of launching a "lightning" war against France and Great Britain—but not a single serious person believed in such a possibility. However, the international propaganda which tries to picture Hitler as a lunatic driven up a blind alley is extremely light-minded. Hitler is still far from that. Dynamic industry, technical genius, the spirit of discipline—all this is present; the formidable German military machine will yet reveal itself. At stake is the fate of the country and the regime. The Polish government and the Czechoslovakian semigovernment are now in France. Who knows whether the French government will not have to seek refuge in Great Britain, together with the Belgian, Dutch, Polish, and Czechoslovakian governments?

DO not believe for a moment, as I have stated, in the actual realization of Hitler's plans concerning a *Pax Germanica*—that is, world domination. German imperialism arrived too late; its military fury will end in a tremendous catastrophe. But before that catastrophe occurs many things will topple in Europe. Stalin doesn't want to be among them. Above all, he safeguards himself from breaking with Hitler too soon.

The press of the Allies searches for symptoms of "coolness" between the new friends and every day predicts a rupture. It is impossible, indeed, to deny that Molotov does not feel too happy in Ribbentrop's embrace. For several years all internal oppositionists in the U. S. S. R. were branded, hounded, and executed as agents of the Nazis. Having finished this work, Stalin joined Hitler in a close alliance. Throughout the entire country there are millions of people intimately connected with those who were executed or imprisoned in the concentration camps because of their alleged alliance with the Nazis, and these millions are now cautious but extremely effective agitators against Stalin. To this it is necessary to add the covert complaints of the Comintern—the unfortunate foreign agents of the Kremlin do not feel at ease. Stalin is undoubtedly attempting to leave open the other possibility. Litvinov was unexpectedly present on the tribune of Lenin's mausoleum on November 7. In the parade, portraits of the secretary of the Comintern, Dimitrov, and the leader of the German Communists, Thaelmann, were carried.

All this, however, is the decorative side of politics, not its substance. Litvinov, as well as the demonstrative portraits, was necessary above all for satisfying the Soviet workers and the Comintern. Only indirectly Stalin

thus lets the Allies know that under certain circumstances he can change horses. But only visionaries could imagine that a reversal of the Kremlin's foreign policy is on the order of the day. So long as Hitler remains strong—and he is very strong—Stalin will remain his satellite.

ALL this may be true, an attentive reader can say, but what about revolution? Doesn't the Kremlin reckon with its possibility, probability, even inevitability? And doesn't speculation on revolution reflect itself in Stalin's foreign policy? The objection is legitimate. Moscow is the last to doubt that a major war will provoke revolution. But war does not begin, it ends with revolution. Before revolution broke out in Germany in 1918, the German army had succeeded in delivering mortal blows against Czarism. In the same way, the present war can crush the Kremlin bureaucracy long before revolution breaks out in some capitalist country. Our evaluation of the Kremlin's foreign policy consequently preserves its force independently of the perspective of revolution.

However, in order to orient oneself correctly in the future maneuvers of Moscow and in the evolution of its relations with Berlin, it is necessary to answer the question: Does the Kremlin propose to utilize the war in order to further world revolution, and if so, then how? On November 9 Stalin considered it necessary to reject in an extremely blunt fashion the supposition that he wishes "the war to be prolonged as long as possible until its participants are completely exhausted." In this case Stalin spoke the truth. He does not at all wish a prolonged war, for two reasons: first, it would inevitably draw the U. S. S. R. into its vortex; second, it would inevitably provoke revolution in Europe. The Kremlin quite legitimately dreads both.

"The internal development of Russia," declare the investigators for London's Royal Institute, "is tending to throw up a 'bourgeoisie' of managers and officials who possess sufficient privileges to make them highly content with the *status quo*. . . . It is possible to regard the various purges as part of a process by which all who desire to change the present state of affairs are being rooted out. Such an interpretation lends color to the belief that the revolutionary period in Russia is over, and that henceforward her rulers will only seek to conserve the gains which the revolution has brought them."

This is really well said! Over two years ago I wrote in *Liberty*: "Hitler is fighting against the Franco-Soviet alliance because he wants a free hand for agreement with Moscow against Paris." At the time these words were interpreted as a prejudiced opinion. Events corroborated it.

Moscow realizes very well that war on a major scale will bring an era of immense political and social repercussions. If those in Moscow could

seriously hope to control the revolutionary movement and subordinate it to their own interests, Stalin naturally would welcome it. But he understands that revolution is the antithesis of bureaucracy and that it mercilessly sweeps aside the privileged, conservative apparatus. What miserable defeats the bureaucratic clique of the Kremlin suffered in the Chinese revolution of 1925-27 and in the Spanish revolution of 1931-39! On the wave of a new revolution a new international organization would inevitably arise which would wipe out the Comintern and deal a mortal blow to the authority of the Soviet bureaucracy in its national entrenchment in the U. S. S. R.

It is surprising how little the les-



Leon Trotsky was one of the leaders in Russia's Bolshevik revolution in 1917, and created and commanded the Red army. Having broken with Stalin, he now lives as an exile in Mexico. As this issue of *Liberty* goes to press, it appears probable that Trotsky will give testimony to the Dies Committee.

sons of the Spanish events have been understood. Defending himself from Hitler and Mussolini, who strove to utilize the civil war in Spain in order to construct a bloc of four Powers against Bolshevism, Stalin set himself the task of proving to London and Paris that he was capable of eliminating proletarian revolution from Spain and Europe with much greater efficiency than Franco and his backers. Nobody strangled the Socialist movement in Spain more mercilessly than Stalin, in those days an archangel of pure democracy. Everything was put into motion: a frenzied campaign of lies and frame-ups, legal falsifications in the spirit of the Moscow trials, systematic assassination of revolutionary leaders. The struggle against the seizure of land and factories by the peasants and workers was conducted, naturally, under the name of the struggle against "Trotskyism."

The civil war in Spain deserves minutest attention, as in many respects it bore the aspects of a rehearsal of the incipient World War. In any event, Stalin is completely ready to repeat his Spanish performance on a world-wide scale, with the hope of better success this time in buying the friendly attitude of the future victors through having proved that no one better than he can curb the Red specter which for terminological convenience will again be labeled "Trotskyism."

For five years the Kremlin conducted a campaign in favor of an alliance among the democracies in order to sell to Hitler at the last moment their love for "collective security and peace." The functionaries of the Comintern received their order, "Left face," and immediately dug out of the archives old formulas about Socialist

revolution. The new "revolutionary" zigzag will probably be shorter than the "democratic" one because wartimes accelerate the tempo of events enormously. But Stalin's fundamental tactical method remains the same: He converts the Comintern into a revolutionary menace to the enemies of tomorrow in order to exchange it at the decisive moment for a favorable diplomatic combination. There is not the slightest reason to fear resistance from the Browders or from people of his type.

Through its docile correspondents, the Kremlin threatens that in case Italy or Japan joins England and France, Russia will enter the war on Hitler's side, striving at the same time to sovietize Germany. (See, for example, the Moscow dispatch in the *New York Times*, November 12.) Astonishing confession! Through the chain of its "conquests" the Kremlin is already so tied to the chariot of German imperialism that the possible future enemies of Hitler automatically become enemies of Stalin. His probable participation in the war on the side of the Third Reich, Stalin promptly covers with a promise to "sovietize" Germany. After the pattern of Galicia? To accomplish this it would be necessary to occupy Germany with the Red army. By means of an insurrection of the German workers? But if the Kremlin enjoys this possibility, why does it wait for Italy and Japan to enter the war?

The motive of the inspired correspondence is too clear: to frighten on the one hand Italy and Japan, and on the other England and France—and thereby to escape the war. "Don't push me to extremes," Stalin threatens, "or I will commit terrible deeds." This is at least 95 per cent bluff and perhaps 5 per cent nebulous hope that in case of mortal danger revolution will bring salvation.

THE idea of Stalin's sovietizing Germany is as absurd as Chamberlain's hope for the restoration of a peaceful conservative monarchy there. Only a new world coalition can crush the German army through a war of unheard-of proportions. The totalitarian regime can be crushed only by a tremendous attack on the part of the German workers. They will carry out their revolution, surely, not in order to replace Hitler with a Hohenzollern or Stalin.

The victory of the popular masses over the Nazi tyranny will be one of the greatest explosions in world history and will immediately change the face of Europe. The wave of awakening, hope, enthusiasm will not stop at the hermetic borders of the U. S. S. R. The popular masses of the Soviet Union hate the greedy and cruel ruling caste. Their hate is only dampened by the idea, Imperialism is watching us. Revolution in the west will deprive the Kremlin oligarchy of its sole right to political existence. If Stalin survives his ally Hitler, it will not be for long.

THE END